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of the Association of  
Assistant Librarians**

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# THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE  
ASSOCIATION OF ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS  
(Section of the Library Association)

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HON. EDITOR: W. B. STEVENSON      Hornsey Public Libraries

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## Announcements

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**I**N view of the prevailing uncertainty, the Annual General Meeting has been postponed. It is hoped to make a further announcement in the next issue.

### LONDON REFERENCE LIBRARIANS' GROUP

A meeting will be held at Chaucer House, on 25th July, at 6.15 p.m. The speaker will be J. W. Perry, of the Paddington Public Libraries. Subject : The Initial stock of a small reference library: some experience of its selection and purchase.

## Where do we go from here?

A. E. Turner

(A revision of a paper given at the Annual General Meeting of the Devon and Cornwall Division of the Association of Assistant Librarians on 10th January 1940.)

**W**HERE do we go from here? Most of us must have asked ourselves that question during the past seven or eight months, but I doubt if we are any nearer finding the solution than we were last September. Can we then, as librarians, attempt to answer the question as it concerns the library service of the country and ourselves in our professional capacity? I don't say that we can, but we should, at least, try to see what effect this war will have upon our work, adapt our policy of development accordingly, and pursue it with all the vigour at our command.

Unfortunately, when war broke out, we—that is, the profession as a whole—had no concrete, workable plan regarding the war-time activities

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of libraries. It is true that, at the Liverpool Conference, the whole matter was discussed with hearty enthusiasm and the unanimous opinion was that, in the event of war, library staffs and buildings should be used exclusively for library work. Just what effect this had it is hard to tell, but it is somewhat disturbing to hear now of the number of library buildings that have been taken over wholly, or in part, for other purposes, and of the number of librarians who have blossomed—or faded, as the case may be—into food controllers, fuel controllers, and so forth. It is easy to be wise after the event, but one cannot help thinking that June 1939 was a little late for the discussion of such an important matter. After all, war was more than a possibility a year previously, and it was quite obvious that if it did come there would be, on the one hand, wholesale commandeering of premises, and, on the other, such things as the black-out and evacuation to bring, as they have done, a considerable increase in the use of libraries throughout the country. It may be that some confiscation of buildings and transfer of staff to other duties was inevitable, but it is a fact that, in many towns, where librarians and their committees had seen the possible shape of things to come, the library service was considered alongside the other essential emergency services (which were in active preparation many months before September, or even June, 1939), with the result that in those towns, libraries have remained libraries and librarians librarians.

Despite the general lack of preparation for work under war-time conditions the record of libraries since last September is not entirely bad. Indeed, the work that has been done by some libraries is truly remarkable and the credit for any successes that may have been achieved is due almost entirely to the individual efforts of library committees and librarians up and down the country.

The L.A.R. for last September was a weighty document which gave us a great sense of our own importance. The opening statement is worth quoting—just in case you have forgotten it:—

“The Library Association has shown its realization of the important part which public libraries can play in maintaining the moral of the public by its early approach to the Lord Privy Seal. It has now been in consultation with the newly formed Ministry of Information, with the result that we are able to publish the following letter from Professor John Hilton, Director of Home Publicity. . . .”

The “early approach” referred to was made in May 1939, and copies of the correspondence between the Association and the Government Departments were not passed on to librarians and their committees until 7th July, less than two months before war was actually declared. Com-

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ment is needless, save to say that if all essential emergency services had not prepared their war plans somewhat earlier than we did the country would have been in a chaotic condition last September. Professor John Hilton's letter did give us some hope that we were to be used as important Government information centres. It talked of regional and local organization, distribution of Ministry of Information material, provision of premises for meetings and provision of poster sites. Well, we all know what has been said of the Ministry of Information. Much of the criticism directed against it has been justified and much has been unwarranted. The task of such a new Ministry was bound to be as difficult as it was immense and mistakes were inevitable. Nevertheless, one cannot help thinking what a great amount of valuable work two or three experienced librarians could have done in the early days of the war acting as liaison officers between the Ministry and libraries all over the country.

As regards the matters set out in Professor Hilton's letter, I think it is true to say that very few librarians have seen or heard anything of the regional organization of the Ministry and, so far as I am aware, there has been little Ministry of Information printed material produced for general distribution. True, we have had plenty of "Our courage, our cheerfulness . . ." etc., and Fougasse's drawings have amused us, but if we attempt to set the cost of their production against their value as real propaganda we can only arrive at one conclusion. A few fortunates did receive the Ministry's publication "Information," but as late as last December, to quote the official phrase, "the whole question of issue (of such material) to libraries" was "still under consideration." Since January, however, I think most libraries have been receiving the successor to "Information"—"Noteworthy," but apart from "Assurance of victory" and one or two other pamphlets it seems to be the extent of the Ministry's very modest adventures in this field. The need for real liaison between the Ministry and public libraries has not grown any less since the early days of the war, and it may be that, in due course, we shall be called upon to play the part, which we undoubtedly can, of distributing information of all kinds as official agents of the Government.

In the meantime, however, individual libraries have not let the grass grow under their feet. They have extended their peace-time reference service and become, in effect, the local ministry of information. The innumerable acts, decrees, orders, and announcements which have made their appearance since the outbreak of war effect the lives of all members of the community. The collection, preservation, and indexing of such material is work for which librarians are particularly well fitted, and their previous daily experience in answering queries of all kinds, and in dealing with the public, enables them to give information and advice which are at

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once intelligible and helpful to all sorts and conditions of people. In many places the local Citizens' Advice Bureau has been established in the public library with the chief librarian acting as the chief information officer. This is library extension work of the highest order, and, quite apart from its practical value to the individual and to the community at large, cannot but fail to do much to improve our relations with the public both now and in the future. The growing tendency to co-operate with the work of the National Council of Social Service through Citizens' Advice Bureaux is particularly pleasing, and one can foresee the establishment in many towns of a local Community Council using the public library as its headquarters and having the chief librarian as secretary.

Turning back to the September Record, item number two on the schedule of war-time jobs was the provision of books for evacuated children. London, of course, was the largest evacuation area, and a scheme for sending books from London libraries to the reception areas was worked out by the London and Home Counties Branch of the L.A. at the request of the advisory body of the Metropolitan Boroughs Standing Joint Committee. Similar schemes were arranged in other parts of the country. The assumption was, that with the wholesale evacuation of children from the large centres of population, children's libraries in those areas would close down and the stocks, and probably the staffs, would be transferred to the reception areas. Owing to the partial failure of the national evacuation scheme the libraries in the evacuation *and* in the reception areas are now finding increased demands being made upon them, with the result that a move which promised to be, at least, fairly successful, has been stalemated. The fact that many thousands of books were transferred freely (and fairly rapidly) is but further evidence of the happy spirit of co-operation which exists within our profession. It is the more to be regretted, therefore, that there was just cause for complaints about the condition of some of the books sent out by libraries in evacuation areas. The matter has been ventilated in the L.A.R. and elsewhere and it is to be hoped that the offenders have taken the deserved reproofs to heart. As regards the transfer of staffs to reception areas, the re-opening, or rather the non-closure, of children's libraries in the evacuation areas precluded this reaching any effective proportions. Consequently, the staffs of the libraries, usually small ones, in the reception areas have had to cope with increased demands from their own readers, the extra books which have descended upon them from London and elsewhere, and with extending a service to the evacuees, most of whom are regular users of their public library at home and expect a good service in their temporary home. That they have been able to do so successfully, with little or no financial aid, speaks well for the efficiency and enthusiasm of the staffs



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of our small libraries. Talking of financial aid, the Board of Education has indicated its willingness to make contributions towards the expenses incurred by evacuation and receiving areas in connexion with the transfer of books. Unfortunately the Board's contributions amount to nothing more than tiny token payments and are of no practical use. However, we must take what comfort we can from the fact that the Board has recognized this work as being of some importance and, by implication, has acknowledged the value of the public library as an adjunct to the educational system of the State.

There is one other war-time job which was referred to in the September number of the Record, and which may easily become a permanent feature of our work after the war is over. This is, of course, the supply and distribution of books for the Forces. Early last summer a list of books for the Forces was prepared and we heard that the War Office and the other Service Departments had made plans for the establishment of camp and depot libraries throughout the country, and for the payment of an annual per capita grant towards their upkeep. Unfortunately war came before these plans could be put into effect, and it is only now (May 1940) that the War Office is beginning to move in the matter once more. What the new plans will be it is hard to tell, but they will depend very largely on the amount of money available for such work. The task of providing even a reasonably good library service for the Forces is truly immense, and it is problematical, to say the least, whether the Treasury will be prepared to finance the project on anything like an adequate scale. Whatever happens, it is up to us to watch the matter very closely, for in it there is a great opportunity to open up an entirely new field of library activity. Conscription is obviously here to stay, and library work with the Forces, both now and in the future, can become a very big thing. If properly handled it might even mean the recruitment of a special technical force of librarians to administer the scheme from within the Services themselves. Indeed, anyone who has more than a nodding acquaintance with the organization of Service establishments will agree that really effective work can only be done from the inside.

In the meantime the Lord Mayor of London's Service Libraries and Book Fund has started work. For some reason the activities of this organization have been shrouded in mystery and have been the subject of only very guarded comment in the professional press. It seems, however, that some books and some money have been collected and that the work is being directed by two librarians of experience. This is excellent as far as it goes, but, from the first, the fund itself has had to face unequal competition from the Lord Mayor's great Red Cross Fund, to say nothing of the *Sunday Times* National Book Fund and the many Comforts Funds

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organized on behalf of county and other units, which, particularly in the provinces, have a far greater call on the sympathies and purses of influential and wealthy people than is generally supposed. Even if the Service Libraries and Book Fund has distributed half a million, or maybe a million, books it is only nibbling at the problem, and the extent of its income is so uncertain that, as at present constituted, it can hardly hope to be more than a distributing agency for books of the lighter sort. This is not to say that the work it is doing may not serve as a foundation on which to build a real library service for the Forces. The President of the Library Association was recently reported in *The Times* as saying that it was hoped to set up libraries in camps and barracks where they do not exist at present, and to enlarge those already established so that young students in arms might be assisted to continue studying for their civil careers. This, of course, envisages something quite different from the popular conception of the purpose of "books for the Forces." Dr. Esdaile probably has much more information than other people as to the attitude of the Service Departments and the Treasury towards this work, for such libraries as he suggests would need to receive regular financial support from the State. To attempt to organize them on a purely charitable basis would be to invite failure.

April 1st and estimates for the new financial year are now things of the past. Local rates generally have been reduced, but libraries have not suffered badly. There have been cases where cuts in book funds and other items of expenditure have been made, but these have been off-set by others where increases have been approved. This is heartening and goes to show that the work we have done in recent months has not been overlooked. On the other hand, because we have been well treated this year it does not follow that the same thing will happen in twelve months' time. Indeed, it would be very foolish to assume that we shall not have to face cuts in our future expenditure. Unfortunately the two largest items in library budgets are "books" and "salaries" and are therefore the most easily cut by zealous committees and councils seeking to economize. These are, of course, the two things which should not be cut on any account. Salaries in our profession are low enough already and the price of books—to say nothing of the cost of living—is rising rapidly. It behoves us, therefore, to see if we can do without anything else. This may not be such a bad thing for us. It is only when we are compelled to examine every penny of our expenditure that we realize which things are absolutely essential and which things we can perhaps do without. It may be thought that the present expenditure on public libraries throughout the country is so low that no cuts can be made without having a serious adverse effect on the service, particularly in the smaller towns. This is

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certainly true in some cases. It is also true that the larger towns will feel cuts in expenditure far less than the smaller.

Do we always realize how few really large library systems there are in the country? Again, do we always realize what a high percentage of the population get their impression of the library service of the country as a whole from the efficiency—or otherwise—of their own local small library? During this war it has been the small library rather than the large that has had to assume additional responsibilities. These additional responsibilities are likely to be theirs as long as the war lasts. Consequently even if some—or all—of them are lucky enough not to have their expenditure cut down too drastically they will be forced to consider ways and means of making what money they *have* got go further.

Economies are best worked out according to local requirements, but most places ought to be able to do something if need arises. Let me give one instance. In recent years library publicity, chiefly of the printed variety, has been very fashionable, but has it been worth all the money that has been spent upon it? I am quite sure that it has been expensive in relation to the good it has done. We have all seen excellent examples of such publicity—reports—posters—catalogues—book-lists and all the rest, but the trouble with the bulk of it has been that it has only preached to the converted. In other words, it has only reached people already using libraries, and in some cases it must be said that it has almost pandered to the tastes of a comparatively small body of people who may be called “advanced” library users, leaving the ordinary reader (if such a person exists) completely untouched. Recently I investigated the publicity policy of a small library—quite a good one—conducted on sound lines by a young and able librarian. The book stock was not at all bad, but there were very obvious gaps which should have been filled before money was spent on much so-called publicity. The librarian, however, produced a monthly book-list, a general guide to the library service, lists for classes, lists on special subjects, lists for teachers, lists for children—in fact lists for everybody about everything. They were well produced and earned the glowing notices they received in the professional press. Unfortunately their value was somewhat discounted by the fact that they were only produced in editions of 500, and about 25 per cent. of each edition was circulated to the profession and the professional press. True enough they were publicity, but they rarely, if ever, reached the unconverted public. This, I am afraid, is not such an isolated case as we might like to believe. Many librarians of small libraries have been bitten by the publicity bug in recent years and there has been quite a craze to produce “typographical cock-tails,” to quote a contributor to a recent number of the L.A.R. These, unless we have plenty of money to spare, are the things we can well do

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without, particularly in war-time. Let us rather devote our energies and our money to the things that really matter—books and a personal service to readers. Devotion to these things will not gain for us glowing notices in the professional press, but, in the long run, will prove to be much more satisfactory publicity than any amount of “typographical cocktails.”

The rising prices of books have been mentioned. Already the increases are anything from ten to twenty per cent., and they can hardly be expected to stop there. Here then is yet another problem for us to solve, and we can only solve it by paying the most careful attention to our book selection. Our book funds are hardly likely to rise proportionately with book prices, in fact, they may tend to go the other way. The prospect here is not a cheerful one, although even out of this there may come one or two good things. The rise in the cost of paper and other materials may, probably will, have the effect of curtailing the publication of much of the poor stuff that has been poured from the presses in recent years. Indeed, the publishing figures for the last six months point to the writing on the wall. This, of course, is a good thing in that publishers will not be able to put just anything on the market. They will be obliged to sift their material and produce only worth-while books likely to show a fairly certain return. Overproduction will have to stop, and this too may be a blessing in disguise, for it will almost certainly put an end to the “remainder” ramp which has been such a curse to the bookseller and librarian for many years. On the other side of the scale it is to be hoped that rising production costs will not put a stop to the publication of such things as standard reference works which, even under normal conditions, rarely produce much profit.

It seems to me that all these are matters of great moment to us, but, strangely enough, since last September, the L.A.R. and the whole of the professional press have been remarkably uninformative about them. No doubt much work is going on behind the scenes. One hopes that enough work is being done and that, before long, the general body of members will learn that the Council of the Library Association is pursuing an energetic and, above all, a long-sighted policy in these times which, without a shadow of doubt, are going to be critical ones in the development of the service for which we are responsible. Opportunity is knocking at our door as it has never knocked before. If the profession is well led during this war the public library service will grow in stature and in public appreciation and will be in a very strong position when the time comes for post-war reconstruction. If it is badly led, much of the progress we have made since 1919—and let us remember that it has been real and worth-while progress—will be lost to us. We must see to it that our standard of service is maintained at the highest possible level of efficiency, that we

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forget all about the unnecessary trimmings which seem to have been creeping into our work in recent years, so that, when the war is over, we shall be ready and able to take the fullest advantage of the opportunities which will be ours.



## The Revival of Fear

Joan Quayle

"*Fear's a fine spur*"—S. LOVER

THE present generation has developed a new cult—the cult of fear. It is not a library science, yet we, who by our profession are inclined to read too much, are bound to take it into consideration because it is evident among recent authors.

Fear atmospheres are very primitive. In the past they were acknowledged and reduced to various evils which could be dealt with by exorcism. In early myths and legends the scapegoat might be a dragon, a supernatural fiend, or a hostile race. The enemy was, of course, routed, and the occasion begot a hero or endowed with new glory one already established. He was for Tir na nog, or elsewhere—a land flowing with fatness, free from fear.

Nowadays, after years in which a sense of security has lulled the fear element almost out of existence, we become aware of it again. There is the fear of the future and the future's future. There is the expansion of experience and understanding which cracks the surface of old conceptions to form a broken land beneath our feet. The outbreak of war is only a sequel to the gathering force of fear, but it is a circumstance which serves to justify the attitude of the new acolyte-in-apprehension. Undoubtedly there will be a flux of fear literature as a result of it.

At present authors naturally take different attitudes towards the fear theme. Some rank it as a major menace—destructive; others allow it a moulding influence on the mental growth of Everyman. Sometimes it dominates a whole story, sometimes it crops up almost unawares. H. G. Wells' little book *The Croquet player* is a fine example of the first type. His is a devastating and uncontrolled fear :—

" . . . A contagion in our atmosphere. A sickness in the very grounds of our lives, breaking out here and there and filling men's minds with a paralyzing, irrational fear."

It attacks the intellectuals first, but it is insidious and will eventually seep into the sluggish soul of the nincompoop.

Isherwood's Mr. Norris belongs to this group too. Mr. Norris

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positively dithers, but he deserves to, and is doomed to dither to eternity. Auden's evil, a social one, destroys the hero of *The Ascent of F6*, and his cloak of heroism becomes as a beggar's rags. It is a provoking fear which appears in sundry guises. The Abbot says :

"The demon is real . . . He is—what shall I say?—the formless terror in the dream, the stooping shadow that withdraws itself as you wake in the half dawn. You have heard his gnashing accusations in the high fever at a very great distance. You have felt his presence in the sinister contours of a valley or the sudden hostility of a copse or the choking apprehension that fills you unaccountably in the middle of the most intimate dinner party."

And all those passively dejected novels with irredeemable situations; much surrealist writing (Hugh Sykes Davies's "Petron," for example); all that poetry, nervously choppy and abstruse or adult nursery doggerel, belong here.

Spender considers the effect of a bomb landing on his bed at night. Auden asks :

"Here am I, here are you :  
But what does it mean? What are we going to do?"

On the other hand, Rex Warner in *The Wild goose chase* conceives a city of concrete inhabited by neurotics under the domination of a mysterious and vicious government. Mercifully the forces of freedom come to grips with the strategies of evil, and the concrete is magicked away. Assurance prevails. Aldous Huxley prefers this approach in *Eyeless in Giza*. Here Anthony Beavis, "obsessed by the fear of being afraid," finally comes to identify fear and fearlessness with the idea of unity :

"The unity of life. Unity demonstrated even in the destruction of one life by another. Life and all being are one. Otherwise no living thing could ever derive sustenance from another or from the unliving substances around it. One even in destruction, one in spite of separation."

Much has been said about the function of librarianship. We claim to be "custodians" of the past for the benefit of the future. But we operate in the present. So what influence does our work bear on contemporary outlook? Not much in many aspects. The student will get up-to-date information from us ; many tired people will turn to us for recreation. But it is chiefly in the realms of imaginative literature that the influence of books is felt. The essence of imagination is inspiration.

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Provided that the book, as a vehicle, is written with sufficient conviction to carry the ideas, the influence is sure to be felt one way or another.

We, then, constitute the medium through which this influence is transmitted to those we serve. Unless we take a prejudiced stand against contemporary sentiment and try to exclude authors expressing it from stock or withhold their books from the shelves, we are bound to disseminate it. If fear is in fashion, librarians are committed to it. In effect we are giving the public of their own. Is it a service?

At all events it is appreciated. People like to read about like people. They like to identify themselves with the writing. In the same way they like to associate themselves with mental likenesses. If the feeling of fear is upon them they will want to read about it. They will want to compare their reactions to those of other people. They will want to come to some conclusion about it. The literature (popular psychology in the non-fiction section) teaching them how to dispel it will not appeal to them, because they know it is not to be dispelled. The imaginative literature teaching them how to cope with it will be more effective.

There is nothing shameful in fear, for it is natural and stimulating, taken reasonably. It is a whetstone for dulled wits and urges us to attempt more. It comes, as ever in perilous days, that we may learn to balance the better, each on his rocking stone in the swollen stream of modern life. It is the quickening of a new-old emotion, ranging with those we acknowledge and accept, and as such it must be accommodated.



## Current Books: Philosophy

SAMUEL ALEXANDER. *Philosophical and literary pieces*. Macmillan. 15s.

POSTHUMOUS papers of the great Jewish philosopher whose *Space, time, and deity* has become a classic. Prefaced by an interesting memorial by his executor, John Laird, they range far and wide, from Spinoza to Dr. Johnson: probably the most interesting is the essay on Pascal, with its brilliant criticism of Bridges' *Testament of beauty*. A remarkable and stimulating book.

G. G. COULTON. *Studies in mediæval thought*. Nelson. 2s. 6d. (Discussion Books.)

Dr. Coulton has attempted a formidable task in this little book, but he has succeeded brilliantly in his object: to make the mediæval philosophers intelligible to the plain man. Here is no dry précis of the disputa-

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tions of schoolmen, but a living narrative, in which Abelard, Wyclif, and the school of Chartres become living forces.

C. E. M. JOAD. *Journey through the war mind*. Faber. 8s. 6d.

Dr. Joad is too intelligent a man not to have altered, by now, some of the opinions expressed here. His journey, though taken last year, is still expressive of many opinions: he interviews a pacifist, a jingoist, a communist, a "Hun hater," and some others, and criticizes their various philosophies wittily and intelligently; finally he persuasively sums up for Federal Union.

C. E. M. JOAD. *Philosophy for our times*. Nelson. 7s. 6d.

This remarkably cheap book is delightful to read, for its author is nothing if not a capable expositor. His object is to summarize the history of philosophy and to provide a system that will stand up to modern conditions of intellectual anarchy. Balanced and sane, his summary will appeal to the plain man because of its clear thinking and still clearer writing.

B. K. MALLIK. *The Real and the negative*. Allen & Unwin. 21s.

Examining in detail the law of thought "A and Not-A cannot co-exist," Mallik explores the position and the qualities of the Negative and attempts to relate them to present-day problems. "If we do propose to extricate ourselves from the age-long recurring tangles of warfare and settlements by persuasion, not only our notion of Divinity, but also our personal dignity or moral values may have to be re-defined." Mallik admits that his work is "an unusual product of a long protracted thought," but suggests that "the steady drift of historic events pointed to such an account as the only solution of the outstanding confusion in thought and practice."

JACQUES MARITAIN. *Science and wisdom*. Bles. 10s. 6d.

The great Catholic philosopher here directs his keen intelligence to a critical analysis of the conflicts of philosophy from ancient times to the present, and to an examination of moral philosophy. Purely philosophical in its appeal, it is a book of undoubted importance, and should find its place in any representative collection in a public library.

GRAHAM WALLAS. *Men and ideas*. Allen & Unwin. 8s. 6d.

A keen observer of men, Wallas did not rely upon text-books for his  
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great and humane understanding of so many problems of this century. In this posthumous collection of his essays and addresses—on education, on organization of the civil service, or on the lives of Bentham—a good idea is to be gained of the philosophy of one of Darwin's most important disciples.



### Divisional Activities

THE Divisions carry on. The strain of war conditions and the difficulties of organization seem only to stimulate members to show what successful meetings can be held in most difficult circumstances. The Kent Division's meeting, arranged in conjunction with the Kent Sub-branch of the Library Association and the Association of Children's Librarians, at Gillingham had to be cancelled owing to the vulnerability of the area. Nothing daunted, the Division proceeded to arrange a meeting for 12th June at Maidstone, where Miss J. N. Noble, F.L.A., of Faversham, made some remarks under the heading of "I sometimes wonder."

The Greater London Division in conjunction with the London and Home Counties Branch of the Library Association held a most successful meeting on 24th April. The weather did its worst, but the enthusiasm of the members triumphed over all difficulties. The first part of the programme consisted of a tour of five of the new Middlesex Branch Libraries, thus enabling members to see such varied types as the transformed chapel at Hayes, the Elizabethan barn at Ruislip, an unfurnished building of original design at Uxbridge, and admirable libraries of modern design at Kenton and Wembley. The meeting at Wembley was a discussion on the motion "That the war-time policy of the public library should be cultural rather than recreational" and was opened by Mr. S. A. Maher, of Middlesex County. Mr. S. G. Saunders, of Willesden, doubted whether the traditional and present policy was primarily cultural and urged that we should do our best to provide the reading matter people wanted. Twenty people gave expression to the faiths that inspire them, very varied faiths too. The voting, however, showed a majority in favour of the motion.

The ideal library is one where the policy is cultural, not because the librarian wishes it, but because the public wills it. This necessitates an educated public and the meeting of the Devon and Cornwall Division on 3rd April at Plymouth was aimed at increasing the knowledge of the public on library matters. Though a meeting of the Division, it was open to the public, and consisted of a display of photographs illustrating recent library buildings and various phases of library service.

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which were exhibited for a week before the actual meeting, an exhibition of lantern slides on the same topics before the meeting, and the meeting itself, which was addressed by Mr. Oswald Job, B.A., of Plymouth. In his speech, "Public libraries: the reader's point of view," Mr. Job suggested various ideas for improving the library service, some of which are already in practice. He felt that classification of fiction instead of an alphabetical arrangement and some distinctive mark on books of admitted literary merit would be helpful. Other suggestions by members of the audience were that archives and sets of periodicals should be readily accessible and not stored away and that more copies of text-books should be provided.

At the Wessex meeting at Bitterne Branch Library, Southampton, on 4th April, Mr. R. W. Lynn in his address, "Some library landmarks and probable post-war trends," emphasized the point that after the war libraries would have to justify their position from the economic point of view. To achieve this Mr. Lynn suggested that we should cater more for the business section of the community, engage in more co-operation with other cultural and educational institutions, and endeavour to build the post-war library on a broader and more popular base. The discussion emphasized the necessity for libraries to off-set reactionary developments however they presented themselves, and suggested that the political future would affect libraries more than the economic post-war slump. This meeting was the best attended the Division has had. The May meeting of the Wessex Division held at Winchester was a magazine evening of an "escapist" nature.

Yorkshire also seemed to feel that while Divisional meetings should add to one's information, they should, if possible, lift the spirits in these trying times. The meeting at Wakefield on 30th May, therefore, consisted of an inspection of a new Junior Library, and either a brewery or a wool mill. This was followed by a paper, "Visitations," by Miss E. Wragg, Deputy County Librarian of the West Riding, about the small libraries in the West Riding County system, their difficulties, their infallible "systems," and the little things which can be so annoying, but here related in a most amusing fashion.

The problems of County Library work were also dealt with by Miss F. M. Austin, of Nottingham County Library, at the East Midland meeting held at Nottingham University College on 30th May. The second paper on this occasion was by Mr. R. Mathewman, of Leicester City Library, and was entitled "Good-bye to all that: more thoughts on economy." Among other economies, Mr. Mathewman urged the abolition of reading-rooms.

The Liverpool and District Branch inspected the new Seaforth Branch

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Library on 26th April, and at the evening meeting there were papers on "The Library and the war: in the city, in the country, and in the town." The annual meeting of the South Wales Division on 25th April enabled assistants to get some idea of the history of the library movement, particularly in Cardiff. The afternoon meeting was addressed by Mr. William Williams, the incoming chairman of the Welsh Branch, and in the evening by Mr. Harry Farr, City Librarian of Cardiff.

Mr. Farr's speech was called "Librarianship in peace and war," and ranged happily over such topics as pioneer work with children, the value of conferences, the impetus given to library work by the removal of rate limitation, county work and regional systems, and the assistant of to-day and yesterday.

E. M. E.



## Students' Problems

D. H. Halliday

### THE MAY EXAMINATIONS

**W**ERE they worth waiting for? The results alone will prove that to the individual, but there are bound to be misgivings according to the unevenness of the various papers. They ranged from the thoroughly representative papers of Advanced Library Administration and Intermediate Classification (though in the latter the examiners must have used the extra months to assemble and refine twenty real "snorters" for the practical paper) to the Elementary Literary History paper which Mr. Horrocks criticizes below. This follows upon a number of such papers which have struck tutors as very unsuited to the intentions of the examination. Rather than discourage their pupils by dwelling on circumstances beyond their reach, tutors have in the past only explained that while the paper may seem difficult, the standard of marking is light. But that is thin consolation for the candidate who has worked conscientiously through the syllabus, yet finds himself stumped over several questions. Mr. Horrocks speaks with the full support of tutors in the Elementary section on a persistent and discouraging feature of the examinations.

### ELEMENTARY

S. H. HORROCKS

#### *English Literary History*

After careful consideration I am convinced that those students who

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were called upon to answer this paper have not had a square deal. It must have been discouraging in the extreme.

In the first place, there were at least four questions which were quite unfair (Q. 1, 3, 4, 6): there were six (Q. 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8) which are of an abominable type. The net result of the unfair questions is that a student who has studied the text-books sufficiently to cover the syllabus has but little chance, except by sheer luck, of passing the examination. The questions demand a knowledge which one would not presume juniors in a public library to have, and they demand a knowledge "of the general texts of writers" despite the distinct instruction to the contrary in the printed syllabus of this examination.

The six questions mentioned above lead one to believe that the examiners are not *au fait* with modern examinational tendencies. They call for too much tabulation and will distinctly benefit the crammer as opposed to the student; and they will severely discourage the kind of study we are anxious to foster, namely, that which will develop intelligence, promote knowledge, and form character.

The catalogue of shortcomings could be never ending, but space forbids mention of more than one other. It is that the paper shows appalling gaps; the greatest periods of our literary fecundity, with the exception of a question on the comedies of Shakespeare, have been ignored: the paper, in fact, becomes no test at all when mention is not made of Chaucer, the Elizabethan Age, Milton, the Post-Restoration, Augustan, and Romantic Ages.

Q. 1 on anthologies, obviously calls for the *Oxford book of modern verse* (ed. W. B. Yeats *not* Quiller-Couch), together with others like *Poems of to-day*, Monro, Newbolt, or Georgian poetry.

Q. 2 demands treatment of Shakespeare's comedies chronologically.

Q. 3 expects the student to have read or to have an intimate knowledge of war books: a wide selection ranging from *Good-bye to all that* to *Journey's end*, is available.

Q. 4 goes beyond the resources of the normal student.

Q. 5, 7, 8 are straightforward.

Q. 6, on biographies, is a teaser. Boswell's *Johnson* will be an obvious first choice, and the trio might well include any of the following: Lockhart's *Scott*, Strachey's *Queen Victoria*, Forster's *Dickens*, Morley's *Gladstone*, E. V. Lucas's *Lamb*, or any of Carlyle's biographies. Autobiographies and collected biographies are ruled out. The statement to "justify your selection" calls for an appreciation of the work's authoritativeness, its literary style, and its treatment of character.

Q. 9. The normal student should consider he has done well if he "spotted" six of the ten books listed.

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### *Elementary Classification, Cataloguing, and Accession Methods*

Q. 1 obviously demands an example of each catalogue entry.

Q. 2 is an enlightened question, but of rather too high a standard. An obvious advantage of Dewey is that there is a number vacant after 940.5 to take books on the present war, should one want to use it. Disadvantages of the scheme are that there is no logical place for works on A.R.P., propaganda, fifth column activities, and for books on events leading to the present war. In addition, and for the time being, the geographical numbers will be slightly awry owing to boundary changes.

Q. 3, on economies in cataloguing, can best be answered by those who have read the many articles which have appeared on this subject in the professional magazines. Sharp's *Cataloguing* also has a chapter on it.

Q. 4 is straightforward.

Q. 5, asking for examples in four of Dewey's classes, is a gift; students should merely have made certain that each of the three examples deal with different Divisions of the Class.

### *Elementary Library Administration*

The usual type of paper, no harder nor easier than those of past examinations.

Q. 1 is a good one and should be adequately answered by all students in libraries where evacuation problems have arisen, or such new services as books for A.R.P. personnel, books for the troops, or citizens advice bureaux have been started.

Q. 2, on statistics, needs diagrams and rulings of books or slips.

Q. 3 is not hard if the student has kept his eyes open; this question also calls for diagrams of book suggestions cards, etc.

Q. 4, on newspaper and reading rooms, is the antithesis to modern tendency and in any case is a very difficult question to spend half an hour on. I myself am unable to suggest any ways in which newspaper and reading rooms can be made of more importance to the service except by transferring to it some of the legitimate duties of the reference and lending libraries.

Q. 5, on specializing, is quite a personal choice, with children's and reference work probably sharing the honours.

## CLASSIFICATION

STANLEY G. SAUNDERS

From what I have gathered in conversation and correspondence with a representative number of students, the general reaction to the theory paper was one of mild shock, with an after effect of quiet pleasure consequent upon returning a more satisfactory script than was anticipated.

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### Theory Paper

Q. 1. I do not remember questions on this point before. *Classification* is essentially a process of synthesis; *Division*, one of analysis. They are opposing methods of approaching the same function—the production of an ordered system from a superficial chaos. The Tree of Porphyry was useful to illustrate both principles. Some candidates wasted time dealing with the differences between “Knowledge” and “Book”—classification—this was quite unnecessary.

Q. 2. Candidates should have emphasized that in *any* classification notation is the apparatus that interprets the schedules when they are expressed as physical units, whether index entries, catalogue cards, museum specimens, or library books. It was absolutely essential to understand this question, and to keep to the point—*purposes* of notation were in question not the qualities necessary to carry out these purposes efficiently.

Q. 3. Broadly speaking, two practical factors effect the classified arrangement of books: the size and shape of books; the shape and layout of the building. The former can necessitate parallel arrangement, e.g. outsized books; or, broken order, e.g. the special shelving needed for musical scores. The latter usually involves broken order, e.g. the wall shelving of fiction. Also size of stock at any particular point throwing out the sequence of the general collection can cause removal to special shelving. Two subsidiary factors completing the answer were efficient guiding, and use of trained staff to administer the stock.

Q. 4. Candidates remembering Bliss's remark, “Classification is an essential economy to readers and librarians,” could have advanced a strong case, showing how the organization given to the stock by classification gives librarians complete and ready mastery over their commodity. The economy and information obtained from the process has enabled librarians to make advancements in book-selection, stock-revision, statistics, and service to readers.

Q. 5. The outstanding advantage is that users knowing where they stand can adopt and apply the scheme, confident that extensive and costly reclassifications and renumberings of books and records will not be caused owing to future changes. The outstanding disadvantage is that the scheme cannot be revised, but merely *expanded*, and cannot be kept abreast of modern developments. Hence important subjects with extensive literatures take subordinate places with inordinately long notations.

Q. 6. The complete difference in arrangement of these sections, and the difference in internal subdivision is so marked that candidates should have found comparison simple, and given added interest to the

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answer by comparing briefly the use of the two arrangements in different types of libraries.

Q. 8. The application of a uniform table to the Library of Congress scheme would make the scheme more serviceable for general application, but conversely it would considerably detract from the scheme's special value as stock organizer of America's National Library.

Q. 9. It is safe to state that most candidates who attempted this question answered it incorrectly, thinking it was a chestnut on the extension marks. It involved a knowledge of the rules set out in paragraph 153 of the last edition of Sayers' *Introduction*; notation was not involved in any way.

The examiners are to be congratulated on the skilful compilation of this paper: original, but fair; covering the whole gamut of the syllabus; including questions on all the main schemes except Cutter; finally, compelling candidates to show whether they could apply their theory. I doubt whether any candidates will get past this paper on a last six weeks' swot. Finally it becomes more imperative than ever that students should be provided with up-to-date text-books. No doubt many candidates, lacking access to the latest editions of Dewey and Sayers' *Introduction* respectively, were precluded from attempting questions 7 and 9.

### Practical Paper

On the whole a fair test, although some of the annotations might have been more informative. The class-marks given below are in order of the titles on the paper, and whilst full responsibility is taken for these placings, other tutors' opinions are represented.

1. 630.1; 636. 2. 338. 3. 946.08. 4. 352.042. 5. 612.6; 616.69 ref. to 618.17. 6. 821.8. 7. 575.1312; 612.6. 8. 338.6. 9. 137.57/159.9235; 374. 10. 323.154. 11. 301.15. 12. 331.833; 339.1. 13. 362.7; 136.7/159.92247. 14. 330; 336. 15. 572.968965; 916.8965. 16. 942.01; 340.8. 17. 644.3. 18. 230; 231. 19. 937.07; 352.037. 20. 923.273.

### INTERMEDIATE: CATALOGUING

R. L. W. COLLISON

The theoretical paper was straightforward: its catches were confined to definitions of *offprint* and *separate* which both Sharp and Harrod give as synonymous—surely an unnecessary trap in an examination noted for its difficulties. The large number of articles which have appeared this year on co-operative cataloguing fully justified question 2, and rewarded those students who took the trouble to read the professional journals while swotting. Question 3 reflects the influence of the new examiner, Miss

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J. Tomblin, and question 8 gives scope (similar to that offered in the usual classification examination question for a special classification scheme) for initiative in constructing an arrangement for Shakespeare entries. The familiar subject-heading question was fairly easy, although not every student may have recognized the L.C.C. in *Century of London co-operation*, and perhaps the necessary reference from AGRICULTURAL PESTS may not always have been given for *Locust war in Cyprus*.

In the practical examination four prospectuses undoubtedly presented difficulties. The *German-English botanical terminology* had two titles and four authors: investigation shows that each title refers to a separate part of the work, so that both titles should be given, although the German sub-title can be omitted, since it is a translation of the English. *Lee, Grant, and Sherman*, in spite of its title, is a study of military strategy in the American Civil War, and even added entries seem hardly justified for the three generals. Löwenfeld's *Nature of creative activity* raises some doubts as to subject heading; the purpose of the book appears to be the demonstration that art does not entirely depend on sight. The illustrations, drawn from work among pupils with weak sight, are in the nature of case-histories, and I suggest that the heading which most nearly approaches the subject is ART—*study and teaching*, with an added entry under BLIND—*education* and a general reference from PHYSIOLOGICAL or EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY. The revised edition of Milne's *Earthquakes* appears to call for the application of rule 19—but to the majority of students it is still known by the name of its original author and, like Brown's *Manual of library economy*, the framework and original title are retained, so that it would seem best to enter under Milne. Mellor's *Quantitative inorganic analysis*, with its special reference to the ceramic industries, demands an additional subject entry under CLAY—*analysis*. The rest of the prospectuses were less difficult, and those who sat for the classification examination the previous day were in no doubt as to the correct form of entry for Gibbon and Bell's L.C.C.



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